

Gordon News

Tuesday, November 2nd, 2021

The willow trees remembered

Last Friday, when we were celebrating Halloween, we lost the big willow tree on the hill, along with another, smaller willow tree next to the tetherball court.

The big willow lost one of its branches two years ago in a windstorm. This time, when it lost its other branch, we found that it was rotten and sadly needed to be taken down. It was fifty years old which is old for a willow which sadly only lives thirty years.

Today, a sixth grader sent a document to the sixth grade, asking them to write notes to the willow tree. Here are a few notes from some sixth grade students who gave permission for us to use their notes:

Inside: Mr. Almeida talks to sixth graders about the difficult decision to cut down the trees.

Dear Willow Tree,

You were a large beautiful tree. You provided us with a shoulder to cry on. You protected us from all the weather. You will never be replaced. We will always remember you as bringing Gordon together. You are amazing and will be remembered by every student at Gordon as fantastic and beautiful. We weaved crowns out of your leaves and branches. Your seeds will grow and we will cherish them as we cherish you in all your glory. You will never be gone from inside of us. I believe that when you fell a bit of your soul went into everyone. We will remember you forever and pass the stories on. Never forget that we will miss you with all of our hearts.

Dear Willow,

You were an amazing tree. You always provided us with a safe space. You made me so happy, and I'm sorry you had to go like this. Seeing you be cut down was heartbreaking. You were at Gordon for so long. I miss you so much. You were majestic, beautiful, lovely, big and pretty. I wish with every bone in my body that you could still be standing tall and proud. You were so special and a big part of Gordon school. Since I was about five you were always there. To someone who doesn't care it probably wouldn't matter, but it matters a lot to me. Just seeing those GIGANTIC chainsaws cutting you down made me so sad. Having those tiny leaves you left us will never be the same as having you here. Good-bye, and I don't only speak for myself when I say, I'll miss you.

I can't believe our time together has come to an end willow trees. You have been at Gordon for as long as I can remember and you have been like a 2nd mascot for us. You have grown so tall, as tall as tall can be. And you really feel like family to me. When you sway in the wind you look beautiful. You have always been with us through our ups and downs. I will really miss you, I really will.

above: a fourth grader's tribute to the trees

100% reported and written by Gordon sixth graders

An interview with Mr. Almeida

Now, an interview with Mr. Almeida, who is in charge of our trees, among other things.

How old was the willow tree?

The willow tree was around fifty years old when it was cut down.

Will we plant another tree?

Yes. For every tree we lose, we will plant two trees, so we will be planting four trees this year.

What will we do with the space?

We can either dig it out, or use a stump grinder to shred it into pieces.

How often do we plant new trees?

We usually plant new trees every year, and, like I said before, for every tree we lose, we plant two new ones.

Why was the tree cut down?

The inside was hollow, and it was old. It wasn't safe to be in the playground. Then, with the last windstorm, when all the branches fell, that was it.

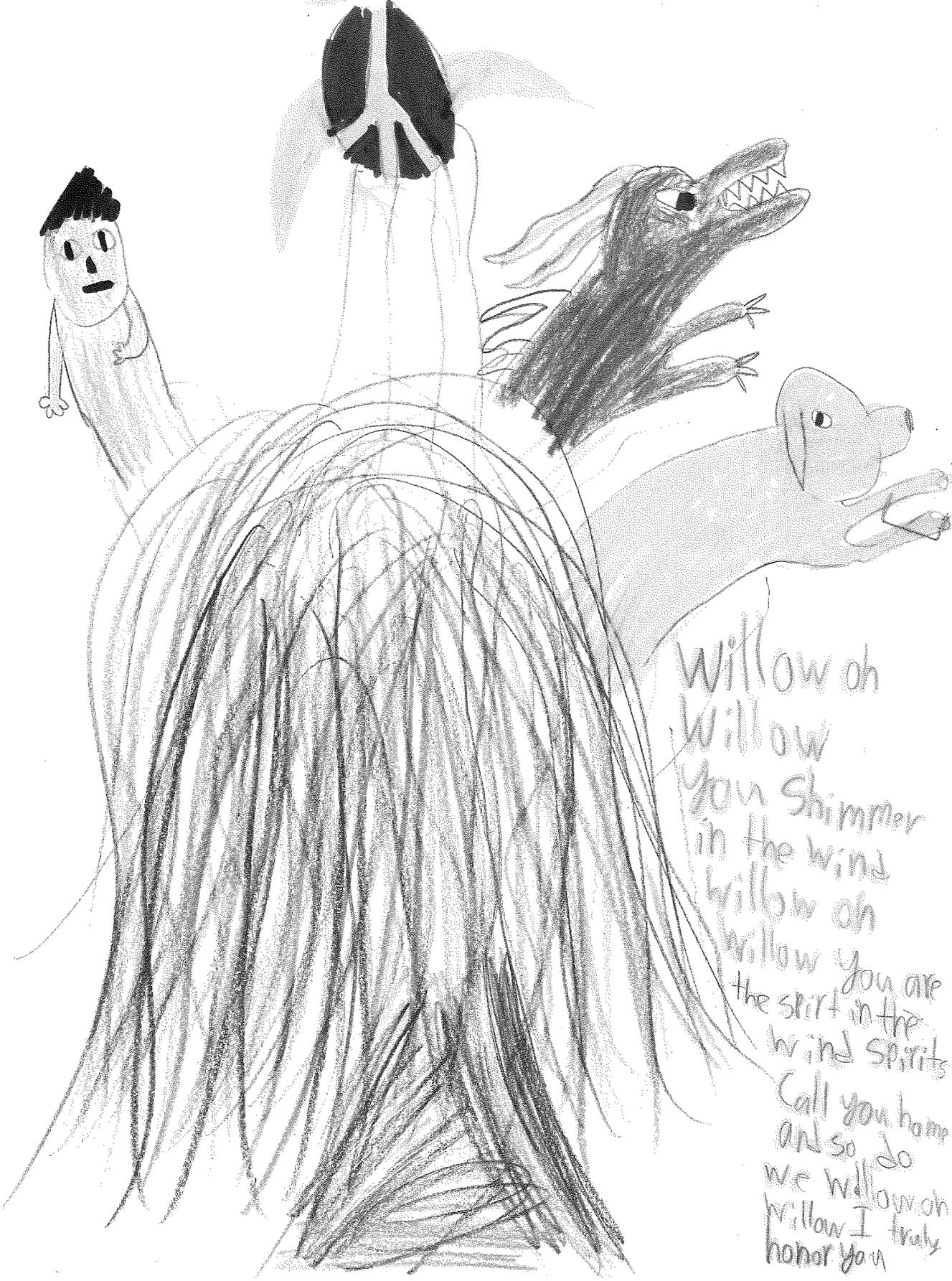


Two seventh grade tributes to the trees

I wonder, I wonder
What do you think as the lightning
cracks
And what do you think as you hear
the thunder
As your branches thrash
Encumbered
By the wind that bends you
Moves you
Breaks you
As your branches fall
Did they hear
Hear your call as you
Cried out in fear?

I watch,
As the trees blow softly in the
wind,
As they sway alongside each
other.
They seem to whisper to me,
"Help us" they cry.
But there is nothing I can do,
Nothing I can give,
Nothing they can receive.
It's such a shame,
They have to die,
While the rest of us keep going,
Keep living,
Keep breathing,
Keep thinking.
And they're not,
They're gone.

A fourth grade tribute to the willows



Willow oh
Willow
You shimmer
in the wind
Willow oh
Willow you are
the spirit in the
wind spirits
Call you home
and so do
we Willow oh
Willow I truly
honor you

New teachers in COVID

In the midst of COVID, school is still running; and this year, there's an abundance of new teachers around campus. So I asked a few of them what it was like to be a new, or semi new teacher during COVID, teaching kids whose faces they've never really seen.

Here's what they said.

*Ms. Applebaum
fourth grade*

"The hardest part is you can't exchange a smile, without talking you can feel seen or heard with just a smile."

*Ms. Palmeri
seventh and eighth grade science*

"It's weird. It's much more difficult to get to know people without that information and there's less association with whose voice goes with what person. But it's weird because your brain kind of fills in the blanks and when they take their mask off it's totally different from what you expected, in some cases."

*Mr. Velez
Middle School music*

"The one good thing is, you know during lunch, I get to see most, if not all of peoples faces, lunch duty certainly helps. The first couple weeks were extremely difficult, only seeing peoples eyes makes it difficult to remember names. Thank goodness for lunch."

*Ms. Bennett
fourth grade*

"It's very different because I've been teaching for many years before this, so it's weird and difficult not to see others' faces, and because facial expressions just tell so much."

Catch up with Mr. Velez

Today we're asking Mr. Velez about how he found Gordon and how he feels about being a new teacher.

What is it like to be a new teacher?

Mr. Velez thinks it's very exciting to be a new teacher here at Gordon.

How did you find Gordon?

Mr. Velez was looking for schools in the northeast when he found Gordon.

How do you like Gordon?

Mr. Velez likes Gordon very much.

When did you start teaching music?

Mr. Velez started teaching music in 2008

When did you move to RI?

Mr. Velez moved to Rhode Island two days before working at Gordon.

